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**SACRAMENTO WOMAN ADMITS STEALING NEARLY \$47,000
FROM NATIONAL CHARITY**

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that former Antelope resident, LINDA ANNE COPPE, 37, pled guilty today to 21 counts of mail fraud. COPPE will be sentenced October 5, 2004.

Before United States District Court Judge Lawrence K. Karlton, COPPE admitted that she stole \$46,805.56 from the national charity, "Rebuilding Together." This charity preserves and revitalizes low-income housing and communities so that low-income homeowners, particularly those who are elderly and disabled and those with children, can live in warmth, safety, and independence.

This case was investigated by the Sacramento Police Department, Office of Financial Crime Investigations.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Michelle Rodriguez, COPPE schemed to defraud the charity through the use of the United States Mail. The statement of facts provided to the Court indicates that COPPE began volunteering for the charity in July 1997. As Treasurer and Bookkeeper of the charity, she had control and access to blank checks, bank statements, and other financial documents belonging to the charity. She also had signatory authority for dispersing funds in the charity's interest. From July 2000 until September 2002, COPPE devised

and implemented a scheme to defraud the charity. In furtherance of the scheme, she violated her position of trust by writing checks from the charity's account for her personal benefit, and mailing them payable to her credit card bank companies to pay her personal credit card account balances. COPPE also falsified the charity's bank, money market, and check statements, and submitted them as truthful. She admitted that she did this to conceal her scheme from detection by concealing the charity's true account balances. COPPE also obtained 23 blank checks from the charity, made them payable to herself, and deposited them into her Washington Mutual Bank account.

The maximum penalty under federal law for 21 counts of mail fraud is 105 years imprisonment, a fine of \$5,250,000, and a 3-year term of supervised release. Restitution is mandatory, and the defendant is liable for the nearly \$47,000 she stole from the charity.

The Sacramento affiliate of "Rebuilding Together" has a website at:
http://www.sacramento.rebuildingtogether.org/About_Sacramento

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